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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - JANUARY 28

¶1. (U) The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

#### Joint FARDC/RDF Operation

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¶2. (SBU) MONUC announced on January 28 that the FARDC continues to advance west of Lubero and reports having penetrated 65-70 kilometers into former FDLR-held areas, including Kasugho and Bunyatende. FDLR combatants generally have not put up any fight up to the present point, but have merely retreated westward and northward out of the area; another report, however, notes that 1,500 FDLR combatants (who had left their families) are massing near Kashebere. In addition, there are reports that FDLR fighters are moving into Orientale Province.

¶3. (SBU) MONUC expects the first major offensives to target FDLR economic zones. According to FARDC reports, four FDLR combatants have been killed so far, and 494 have surrendered (Note: MONUC emphasized that this latter point has not been verified. End note). MONUC reported separately that 20 FDLR combatants in Nyabiondo and ten in Pinga have surrendered to the FARDC. The Nyabiondo group has already been transported by helicopter to Goma.

¶4. (SBU) MONUC remains concerned regarding the possibility of FDLR reprisals against predominantly Tutsi villages. Separately, an NGO reported that the population of Chambucha, approximately 100 kilometers inland from Lake Kivu, just north of the border between North and South Kivu, is in a panic over the possibility of anti-FDLR attacks by FARDC and is scattering in every direction. Chambucha has been until now a "free zone" town located between FARDC and FDLR-held areas.

#### MONUC Assistance

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¶5. (SBU) MONUC reported the establishment of a Joint Operations Center (JOC), staffed by MONUC, FARDC, and RDF representatives. Daily meetings will be held at which an overview of recent FARDC/RDF actions and a preview of operations planned over the next 48 hours will be provided (Note: There is general skepticism that such previews of future operations will in fact be provided. End note). The JOC will look to provide advice to the overall operation, and also contribute to repatriation and FARDC integration efforts.

¶6. (SBU) A senior MONUC military officer told us that MONUC is in the process of re-evaluating where to position its forces in order to better protect civilians. MONUC has identified 11 new deployment positions and has closed four others, in an effort to consolidate its peacekeepers. In general, these movements will be to the west (as far as Walikale), as this is where MONUC expects the brunt of the fighting to take place. The new deployments will be on a 14 day temporary basis, renewed as necessary.

## Integration

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¶17. (SBU) MONUC reported that Ntaganda and the GDRC Minister of Defense traveled to Rutshuru on January 24 to emphasize the need for CNDP fighters there to integrate into the FARDC; there would be serious consequences for those who refused. CNDP integration is scheduled to begin January 28 and the FARDC hopes to conclude the process within 48 hours (Comment: This kind of timeline guarantees, at best, a hurried retread of the failed "mixage" process. A more formal, measured integration process will be necessary to guarantee the full dismantlement of the CNDP. End comment). Separately, ten PARECO fighters and 170 Mai-Mai in the Nyamailima area have reportedly volunteered to join the FARDC.

¶18. (SBU) MONUC noted that the regroupment sites for Mai-Mai, PARECO and CNDP fighters who want to join the FARDC and participate in the anti-FDLR offensive are Kimoka and Bubambiro for Masisi Territory, and Rumangabo for Rutshuru territory. MONUC expects to receive requests for transportation to the regroupment centers.

## Operation Lightning Thunder

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¶19. (SBU) MONUC passed unverified information that a senior LRA commander has been wounded in Garamba Park and is negotiating through the International Organization for Migration for his surrender.

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